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LETTER DATED 9 JUNE 1993 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CROATIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Current tragic events in central Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly around the town of Travnik where hundreds of Croats have been killed in the past few days, are of the utmost concern for the Republic of Croatia and its citizens. It is disturbing evidence of continuing deterioration of the situation in the whole region, especially in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The unwillingness of the world community to start successful implementation of the Vance-Owen plan throughout the entire territory of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina has encouraged all kinds of radicalism and dangerous militant behaviour. In central Bosnia and Herzegovina the most recent victims are 100,000 Croats, who are being exposed to ethnic cleansing and murderous atrocities that have been confirmed by United Nations eyewitnesses in the field.

After the start of the recent offensive by Muslim forces, more than 25,000 Croats have been expelled from their homes, and 60 Croat villages have been destroyed. It should be pointed out that there are no more Croats in Travnik, where they constituted almost 50 per cent of the pre-war population. All the efforts by United Nations forces located in the area to stop the persecution of the innocent Croatian population remain futile. Having said this, we wish to commend the action of British United Nations soldiers who sheltered 200 Croats and saved them from imminent death. Unfortunately, thousands were not able to find such protection, and at least 600 men, women and children lost their lives. The fact that more than 4,000 people, 700 of them soldiers of the Croatian Defence Council (HVO), were forced to surrender to nearby Serbian forces, fleeing for their lives in front of the Muslim forces, clearly shows how dramatic the situation is.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia wishes to express its position that the Muslim offensive in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the killings and persecutions of innocent Croatian civilians must come to an immediate halt.

My Government believes that the only possible way to end these unfortunate developments, which have resulted in further atrocities and ethnic cleansing, is to persuade the parties in conflict to immediately start the implementation of the Vance-Owen plan, as was agreed by Alija Izetbegovic and Mate Boban in Medjugorje on 19 May 1993.

The continuation of the present offensive will most likely lead to a massive flow of new refugees into the Republic of Croatia, which is already accommodating more than 250,000 Muslim refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina. If a new flow of refugees occurs, Croatia will be hard pressed to continue providing assistance to these individuals.

The Croatian Government has delivered a strong protest to the President of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegovic, demanding that he undertake steps for the immediate cessation of the offensive actions taken by Muslim forces. Since this remains unfulfilled, we call for an emergency meeting of the Security Council, in sincere hope that it will help to provide an adequate response to the situation that has all the elements of a humanitarian catastrophe, whose consequences are jeopardizing the fragile peace process in the region.

May I ask for your kind assistance in circulating this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mario NOBILO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative